Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel claim 25 and amend claims 24, 26, 31, and 36 as indicated below.

1. (Canceled).
2. (Canceled).
3. (Canceled).
4. (Canceled).
5. (Canceled).
6. (Canceled).
7. (Canceled).
8. (Canceled).
9. (Canceled).
10. (Canceled).
11. (Canceled).
12. (Canceled).
13. (Canceled).
14. (Canceled).
15. (Canceled).
16. (Canceled).
17. (Canceled).
18. (Canceled).
19. (Canceled).
20. (Canceled).
21. (Canceled).
22. (Canceled).
23. (Canceled).

24. (Currently Amended) A method for stabilizing conjugates composed of colloidal particles and biomolecules, the method comprising:

adding an amount of detergent that does not exceed a critical micelle concentration to a solution containing biomolecules, and thereafter loading colloidal particles with said solution of biomolecules wherein said detergent does not adversely influence the function of the conjugates by displacing the biomolecules or by interacting with the biomolecules or the colloidal particles after loading.

25. (Canceled).

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~25~~ 24, wherein the concentration of detergent is 0.001 to 1 mM.

27. (Previously Added) The method of claim 24, further comprising:

adding an additional stabilizer after loading the colloidal particles.

28. (Previously Added) The method of claim 27, wherein the additional stabilizer is an inert protein, polyethylene glycol, or a mixture thereof.

29. (Previously Added) The method of claim 24, wherein the colloidal particles are selected from the group consisting of gold, silver, copper, platinum, palladium and mixtures thereof.

30. (Previously Added) The method of claim 24, wherein the biomolecules are selected from the group consisting of antibodies, antibody fragments, lectins, enzymes, streptavidin, avidin, protein A, antigens, peptides and haptens.

31. (Currently Amended) A process for producing colloidal particles having biomolecule adsorbing surfaces, the process comprising:

adding an amount of detergent that does not exceed a critical micelle concentration to a solution containing biomolecules, and thereafter contacting colloidal particles with said solution of biomolecules wherein said detergent does not adversely influence the function of the conjugates by displacing the biomolecules or by interacting with the biomolecules or the colloidal particles after loading.

32. (Previously Added) The method of claim 31, wherein the colloidal particles are selected from the group consisting of gold, silver, copper, platinum, palladium and mixtures thereof.

33. (Previously Added) The method of claim 31, wherein the biomolecules are selected from the group consisting of antibodies, antibody fragments, lectins, enzymes, streptavidin, avidin, protein A, antigens, peptides and haptens.

34. (Previously Amended) A method for stabilizing conjugates composed of colloidal particles and biomolecules, the method consisting essentially of:

adding detergent to a solution containing biomolecules, loading colloidal particles with said solution of biomolecules, and thereafter adding an additional stabilizer wherein said detergent does not adversely influence the function of the conjugates by displacing the biomolecules or by interacting with the biomolecules or the colloidal particles after loading.

35. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 34, wherein the amount of detergent does not exceed a critical micelle concentration.

36. (Previously Added) The method of claim 35, wherein the concentration of detergent is 0.001 to 1 mM.

37. (Previously Added) The method of claim 34, wherein the additional stabilizer is an inert protein, polyethylene glycol, or a mixture thereof.

38. (Previously Added) The method of claim 34, wherein the colloidal particles are selected from the group consisting of gold, silver, copper, platinum, palladium and mixtures thereof.

39. (Previously Added) The method of claim 34, wherein the biomolecules are selected from the group consisting of antibodies, antibody fragments, lectins, enzymes, streptavidin, avidin, protein A, antigens, peptides, and haptens.